

HYDERABAD

# Accord highest priority to women's health needs: VP

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Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has underlined the need for according highest priority to the health needs of women.

“We will not be able to create a healthy society if the health needs of women get neglected,” he said. “Health interventions relating to women must focus on bolstering their health needs since they form the bedrock of a healthy society.”

Mr. Venkaiah Naidu was speaking on Friday after presenting the Yudhvir Memorial Award through a video conference to Hyderabad-based gynaecologist Dr. Evita Fernandez in recognition of her service for the cause of women's healthcare and empowerment.

He said considerable progress had been made in reducing maternal mortality ratio and there is a need to accelerate the decline to achieve target 3.1 of sustainable development

goals set by the United Nations that aims to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio by less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.

## Focus on normal birth

“There should also be concerted efforts to address the problem of under-nutrition among women,” he said. Complimenting Dr. Evita Fernandez for her pioneering work in the areas of women's health and reproduction, he said she is a strong votary of normal birth.

The VP appreciated the efforts of the State government and Fernandez Hospital along with the UNICEF to reduce caesarean sections and increase normal births in public hospitals. “It is a laudable objective and more private hospitals should join the drive to reduce C sections,” he added.

He also said that improving maternal health care was of crucial importance and commended Dr. Evita's initiative to create a national cadre of midwives. He paid rich tributes to the late Yudhvir on whose name the award was instituted asserting that he was man of many facets.

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